

A GUIDE TO
INDIANA'S NEWBORN
HEARING SCREENING
PROGRAM



The What, When and Why
of the Program.



The Newborn Hearing Screening Program for the State of Indiana

WHAT IS IT?

Testing for hearing loss present at birth.

WHO IS SCREENED?

Your baby and every baby born in Indiana.

WHEN IS IT DONE?

The first test is done before your baby leaves the hospital. Infants who do not pass the first test will need a second test, usually before they leave the hospital, but definitely within 2 weeks.

HOW IS IT DONE?

This test is not painful. It is done with special hearing screening equipment at the infant's bedside before you leave the hospital.

Currently there are two acceptable methods. Both require specialized equipment, take five minutes, are painless and will be done before your baby's discharge.

Evoked OtoAcoustic Emissions (OAE) is done by placing tiny microphones in your baby's outer ear canal and recording the middle ear response to clicks or tone bursts.

Auditory Brainstem Responses (ABR) is done by pasting three electrodes on your baby's scalp and measuring brain waves generated in response to clicks.

WHY IS IT DONE?

Undetected hearing loss may delay a baby's speech, language and knowledge development. Appropriate services to prevent these problems should occur no later than six months of age.

WHAT CAUSES A SIGNIFICANT HEARING LOSS AT BIRTH?

There are a variety of causes of hearing loss at birth. Some are temporary and easily corrected, such as those that are a result of blockage in the ear canal or fluid in the middle ear. Others are more serious and more difficult to treat. Some infections that mothers may have during their pregnancy, such as Rubella, may result in a hearing loss at birth. Hearing loss may also be the result of genetic factors.

IF MY BABY DOES NOT PASS THIS TEST DOES IT MEAN THAT MY BABY IS DEAF?

No. It only means that your baby will need further testing.



WHAT ARE THE CHANCES THAT MY BABY WILL NOT PASS THIS SCREENING TEST OR REALLY HAVE A HEARING LOSS?

About 5 babies per 100 do not pass their initial test but less than 3 per 1000 actually have a real hearing loss. Babies who do not pass the second test need a diagnostic evaluation to decide if a hearing loss exists, and the degree and nature of the hearing loss. The diagnostic hearing test should be done within 3 month of age.

Some babies who do not have hearing loss present at birth may be at risk for developing hearing loss later. Babies identified as being at risk for delayed onset hearing loss should be retested at 9-12 months of age.



IF MY BABY HAS A HEARING LOSS, WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

This is best determined by an audiologist and/or ear, nose and throat specialist.

The treatment or service depends on the nature of the hearing loss. However, if your baby does have a hearing loss, it is essential that appropriate services begin before 6 months of age. Your hospital or primary care physician will send you to a specialist to help decide what is the best treatment or services.

Regardless of whether your baby does or does not have a hearing loss, they need lots of love and attention. They need to be held, to have you look directly into their eyes and speak to them in soothing tones. Even the baby who can't hear you responds to your touch and your eyes. Communicating using your voice, touch, and facial expression are important ways of interacting with your newborn.



IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT INDIANA'S UNIVERSAL NEWBORN HEARING PROGRAM OR YOUR BABY'S HEARING TEST, PLEASE CONTACT:

- Your primary care physician
- First Steps
Indiana Children's Special Health
Care Services
1-800-441-7837
- Maternal and Child Health Services
Indiana State Department of Health
1-800-761-1271



Indiana State
Department of Health